

To: Representative Hughes, Chair and Members of the Committee on Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

From: George Lombard, DVM

Date: Sept. 6, 2017

RE: House Bill 4782 and 4783

While we agree with most of HB 4782, we believe there are two changes that would improve it.

- 1) Under Sect. 66 2A 9), we do not believe that Class 2 eBikes should be allowed on any of our trails. They can be propelled without pedaling; therefore, they are a motorized vehicle.
- 2) Under Sect. 66 2A 10), consider rewording as follows:

“ A local authority or agency of this state having authority over a trail made of natural surface tread made by clearing the native soil with no added surface material shall decide the e Mountain Bike use on such trails.”

In support of eBike usage on trails in Michigan,, every fall the “Ice Man Cometh” mountain bike race runs 5,000 racers over part of the Vasa Trail and causes no damage. It is not feasible to think that a few e Mountain Bikes will damage the trail.

IMBA (International Mountain Bike Association) has researched the use of e Mountain Bikes on dirt trails and concluded they do not damage the trail.

In our area, who are buying and using eBikes?

Early Parkinson Disease

Rare Neuromuscular Disorder

Cardiac-By Pass Patient

Pacemaker Wearers

COPD

Spouses so they can keep up with their partners

86-yr old leg amputee

Local bike dealers tell us that their eBike sales are in the 50+ age group

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION

While researching for this article, I found some info about the IMBA (<https://www.imba.com/>). I was so used to getting instant hate from any bicycling organization (whether for road bikes or off-road), that I never really looked much at any of their publications, even when ebikes were mentioned (*ebikes are cheating! the lazy bastards...*).

I was pleasantly surprised at the position of the IMBA on off road ebikes. Trails will experience a certain amount of wear and tear from off-road bicycles, and the IMBA funded a study and published a fact that we already knew. *E-bikes don't cause any more damage than regular bicycles.*

The one area where ebikes seem to be getting some traction, is to help riders get to the top of a downhill (DH) run (recently called a *single-track*). Like snow-skiing, the downhill part is fun and exhilarating, but...getting to the top without a "lift" is exhausting.

I recall many years ago reading a snow-skiing magazine that reprinted an article from many years ago, when the larger resorts had first begun to build lifts for their customers. Snow ski purists were publicly lamenting that *now*...skiers would not have to *hike* to the top of the mountains. Just *anybody* could start snow skiing, and adding lifts would obviously lead to the best runs getting more crowded.



(<https://www.electricbike.com/california-ebike-laws/downhill/>)
Down-hillfing and single-track courses are now big business, and I think they will be around for the foreseeable future.

It was only a couple of decades ago that ski resorts began using ski runs in the summer to host down hill mountain-bike runs, in order to make some money in the slow summer months by using the same properties. Now there are elaborate and exciting single-track runs that are not used for anything else.

It was a breath of fresh air to see an organization like IMBA publicly supporting ebikes in a very reasonable manner. I am mentioning them here because they deserve credit and more recognition for their efforts. They are one of the good guys.

Kudos to the IMBA, the California Bicycle Coalition, People for Bikes, nybc.net, Accel/Currie, and Pedego